

Discussing Wildlife Trafficking at the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit

What is the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit?

It's the largest engagement a U.S. president has ever had with African leaders and governments. The [U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit](#) will bring together 50 heads of state, along with a range of U.S. and African civil society and business leaders, to discuss the future of Africa.

What issues will the Summit address?

The summit leader sessions will focus on topics such as trade and investment, peace and regional stability, and good governance. The signature events will address issues such as civil society, women's empowerment, global health, resilience and food security, and wildlife trafficking.

What will happen at the wildlife trafficking event?

[U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell](#) will host several African presidents, U.S. government representatives, nongovernmental organization leaders and Washington Fellows in a conversation on combating wildlife trafficking.

During the event, African presidents are anticipated to share best practices and ways forward on countering the wildlife trafficking threat and inspiring youth to safeguard their natural heritage.

Why is this issue important to young African leaders?

Wildlife trafficking is a multi-billion dollar criminal enterprise. It threatens not only conservation efforts but also security and livelihoods.

From turtles to lions, countless species have been poached to the brink of extinction. More than 60 African elephants were slaughtered every day in 2012 to supply the illegal ivory trade. And in 2013, a record 1,004 rhinos across South Africa were poached for their keratin horns.

In addition to this environmental destruction, wildlife trafficking also undermines the rule of law, fuels corruption, jeopardizes economic development and contributes to the spread of disease. The consequences are particularly devastating for African countries on the front lines of the poaching crisis, with increasingly well-armed poaching syndicates posing a significant challenge for African militaries, police forces, park rangers and community scouts.

The U.S. National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking outlines three ways the United States will work to combat wildlife trafficking: 1.) strengthening domestic and global enforcement; 2.) reducing global demand; and 3.) building international cooperation and partnerships.

Photo credit: Images of Africa Photobank/Alamy

"What was the outcome of the Combatting Wildlife Trafficking Signature Event at the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit?"

During the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit's "Dialogue on Combating Wildlife Trafficking" Signature Event, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell led a panel discussion of African heads of state (President Kikwete of Tanzania; President Pohamba of Namibia; President Ondimba of Gabon; President Gnassingbé of Togo) about the impacts of wildlife trafficking in their countries. Council on Foreign Relations President Richard Haass moderated a dialogue with the heads of state, who

shared their ideas for what was needed to protect their wildlife. Best practices and next steps to address the trafficking of elephants, rhinoceroses and other endangered species include mobilizing youth, involving the community, seeking out innovative technology solutions, and working with governments in a multilateral effort. In 2014, the United States will invest more than \$60 million to combat wildlife trafficking, expand its efforts to reduce demand, strengthen law enforcement, and foster international cooperation.
